

THOUGHTS ON GRANT SEEKING TO FOUNDATIONS AND CORPORATIONS

Michael J. Koscinski, M.S., M.S.W.
Drug Free Communities Support Program

1. Never seek funding to satisfy your organization's needs. Funder's don't work that way. You must look at your organization and your request from the Funding Source's Perspective - this is the Golden Rule of Grantseeking.
2. Don't expect to get funded if you meet most but not all of the funder's guidelines.
3. One size does not fit all. Go into greater detail in areas of concern to your specific funder rather than sending out one proposal to a dozen foundations.
4. Use layman's prose versus academic jargon.
5. Communicate Who You Are, What You Want, and Why They Should Support You.
6. Give your donor just enough detail on your program-generally speaking, less is more.
7. Demonstrate that YOUR ORGANIZATION CAN CARRY IT OUT.
8. Know your organizational strengths.
9. Watch your Attitude. Avoid sounding arrogant.
10. Support your assertion with facts.
11. Get someone else to read your proposal before you send it out.
12. Try to get a meeting with the funder early on before you develop your proposal.

13. Overlook nothing by sweating all the details.
14. Take time to visit a program that's currently funded. Learn how they put it all together.
15. Write a one page synopsis- as follows: What this proposal is about; How much money you want; and Why is the proposal worth reading.
16. Write a Great Introduction. This is the funder's first impression. Keep the reader's interest. Polish sentences, use action verbs and keep the writing tight.
17. In the conclusion, remind the funder of the lasting positive benefits of the program.
18. Build in time to improve upon your original draft.
19. Write strong heading and subheadings.
20. Avoid five dollar words-keep your writing simple and direct.
21. Include a compelling story.
22. Emphasize benefits- e.g., "the new staff would provide clients suffering from mental illness with greatly needed services and improve the quality of their lives."
23. The longer the stretch of time you can free up for writing the better.
24. Study the funders themes- World Peace? AIDS in the Third World?
25. Check out the annual report or better yet, their IRS return (all foundations have to list every grant they give on their tax return which is available on their Form 990. Please see the following two important links:
 - a. <http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/990finder/>
26. http://www.npccny.org/Form_990/990.htm

27. Proofread with great care.
28. Make the cover letter work for you.
29. Make your project title work for you –the best example-“Gone with the Wind.”
30. Be sure it’s addressed to the right person at the right address.
31. If you get money, invite the donor over to see the program or building in person. Make a special point to say thank you.
32. Is your proposal handsome, tasteful, got its act together? Remove anything that jars or raises doubts in your mind.
33. Now get to work looking for money to make your project sustainable.